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DEPARTMENT OF VISITING NURSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE

IN CHARGE OF

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VACATION SKETCHES

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The guardian mountain of Edinburgh, known as Arthur's Seat, is an imposing looking hill from whose splendid drives one gets a wonderful panorama of Scottish scenery, on clear days even down the Firth of Forth to the sea. At the foot of the mountain is a big park, another of nature's lavish gifts to this favored city.

July 25. We left Edinburgh for Keswick, intending to spend about six hours en route. Actually we spent seven, but they seemed seventy. Trunks are labeled, never checked, in this proper country. There is a luggage van in every train and one is supposed to "have an eye" to one's own belongings. Being uninitiated, we had changed cars twice before this fact was driven home and as we rode through beautiful country, our downcast hearts could only contemplate "trunks." Those wretched objects followed safely on the next train, but no one who has ever endured this silent agony can treat the subject lightly. All the sympathy or advice that we could wring from at least six station-men was the dour remark "Ye should have looked after them." Our first change came at Carlisle where we risked losing our connection for a glimpse of the cathedral and its marvelous east window, the largest and finest in England. We tore ourselves unwillingly away, only to learn upon reaching the station that our train was an hour delayed, an unusual circumstance.

The following week we spent in the English Lake Region attending the Fabian Society Summer School at the Barrow House near Keswick. The classes were so arranged that a different subject was planned for every week and we were fortunate enough to be there for a conference on the "Working of Social Insurance" in which the discussions were opened by Mr. Sidney Webb, whose writings on the subject of a state medical service are full of suggestions of interest to public health nurses. Nurses planning a European vacation would get a great deal of interesting information, as well as a brimming week of local color, by attending the Fabian Summer School. So many people sign up for

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it, however, that it is not always possible to get into the house, but there are good boarding places all about. The Lake Region is famous chiefly for its really wonderful scenery and its memories of Wadsworth, Ruskin, Thomas Arnold, Southey and other Englishmen of letters. Its quaint villages beggar description, but any lover of simple country life would be well repaid by a walking-trip or a bicycle-trip over these splendid roads through this attractive bit of rural life.

One may travel in England as expensively as in the United States, but a good walker, willing to put up with the usual country conveniences, can take a delightful trip through little-known highways and byways for a surprisingly small amount. It has been done for less than two hundred dollars but as the cost of living increases, it would be well for anyone making her first trip to plan on at least four or five hundred dollars. Money not spent can always be carried home, but it would be unpleasant to find oneself among strangers and penniless. The second trip may be made on less as economical traveling is learned from experience.

Scotland's beauty is wild and striking but all England appeals to one as a beautifully kept garden. Everywhere there are fine old churches and castles and scenes as attractive as they are unusual to an American visitor. A public health nurse visiting England for the first time is impressed by its sense of historical past and comes home better balanced for her own social work, understanding better the relative value of things both large and small. While in London I heard a woman say sadly, "The London of Dickens is a thing of the past," and her companion replied, "That is the finest tribute you could pay to Charles Dickens. Do you suppose he wrote those novels to encourage the perpetuation of those infamous men or to so arouse public conscience that changes had to be made?"

We are better able to see our own local problems in their true perspective after visiting people who are as earnest, as happy and in certain respects quite as comfortable as ourselves, in spite of their stirring past; nevertheless, if we do return convinced that one bad election will not entirely ruin our city or nation, we are also more than ever determined that our present efforts for better housing, more playgrounds or higher wages shall not for one instant be abated, for no loyal American ever wants to see reproduced in America the class distinction, the poverty and misery seen in English cities both large and small.

July 30, Morley's Hotel, Trafalgar Square. From our windows a confused murmur of sedate street traffic and an unobstructed view of the famous Nelson monument, the National Art Gallery, and Trafalgar

Square, site of scenes impressive and tempestuous, sad and hilarious make us long for Sunday and the big Socialist mass-meeting that has been called to denounce Germany's ultimatum and the war-cloud that is growing larger daily. Our interest in this historic spot, however, is diverted to bath-tubs and a most English maid who announces "hot bath in the room, 1 shilling, in the bathroom one and six." Only two desperate Americans could squander seventy-five cents on such luxuries as hot baths after an eight hour train ride. Sceptical tourists question the proverbial Englishman's love of tubbing, for even a cold bath "costs extra." Perhaps the tariff is less for a true son of Britain.

July 31. To the North German Lloyd for a ticket transfer, then a glorious day in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. Everywhere, anxious vergers and police dog our footsteps, evidently the militants are active again.

August 1. Germany has gone mad. One ultimatum after another has issued from its pen so rapidly that we wonder whom the next one will defy. War has been declared on Russia. The steamship offices are closed; our passage home seems printed on excellent quality of useless paper. Still London lures and the skies have not yet fallen. I dined with Mrs. Bedford-Fenwick and Miss Breay at the High Holborn restaurant and was delighted to talk shop once more with two such interested and inspiring English nurses. We talked registration; we thought war.

Sunday, August 2. More than ten thousand Socialists packed closely together, stood in the pouring rain today to hear Keir Hardie, Margaret Bondfield and several others denounce war. The speakers stood on the base of the Nelson monument which is so large that someone addressed the crowd from each of its four sides. Our hotel windows were too exclusive so we slipped on rain-coats and joined the throng with a delightful sense of insecurity. But an English crowd is not an American election-night nor yet a French mob and we were as safe in the enormous gathering as we could have been anywhere. The English Socialists were astounded to hear that their German brethren have joined the colors and the meeting broke up sadly. Some of the crowd remained, however, and orderly mobs paraded from the Square to Buckingham Palace and back again until after midnight.

Monday, August 3. Bank holiday, a beneficent institution declared four times a year and usually spent in country trips and picnics. This year, however, the stations are deserted, the streets are full of anxious people of all nations. A hurried trip to the American Embassy, hidden away in a side street, convinced us that our ambassadors needed better quarters. Nobody knew anything, the very clerks seemed alien but

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it was the next best place to that land so far away and hundreds of our fellow countrymen were there, vainly seeking information. Attended an American mass-meeting at the Waldorf in the afternoon and were proud of the energy that had an association, with committees formed for every conceivable duty, organized within two hours. Here we met fellow countrymen who had just reached England, leaving everything but hand-luggage on the continent, and such cheerful losers they were. Some were penniless, others practically so, for their German and French notes were, for the time being, valueless but there were no complaints, no hysteria and little real anxiety visible. The "American Committee," as the new association is called, made us all feel comfortable again.

Tuesday, August 4. England has declared a Bank Holiday until Friday and a moratorium. The latter doesn't interest us but the Bank Holiday means no more money until Friday, maybe none then. How far away America seems! If the skies were to fall, nothing would amaze us. We made a round of the foreign offices, just to be doing something, and found Miss Goodrich at Brown Shipley's. We commiserated together for she and Miss Nutting and Miss Nevins had just arrived, baggageless, from Vienna, after a thrilling and unpleasant journey. From these we learned that the American Express, to its everlasting glory and credit, was paying cash for its checks, so we stood in line in the rain three hours, and received \$20 each for our toil. Never was money so welcome. That morning we had tried to purchase some gloves at a famous store but the polite clerk told us that our five-pound Bank of England note, was worthless—until Friday. No wonder we clutched our gold pieces as if they were priceless treasures.

Sunday, August 9. The past week would have been a night-mare had not every citizen of England offered his best hospitality to us. Hotels waited for payments, shops offered charge accounts, bus-drivers were sympathetic, if firm, with silvered Americans who had no copper pieces. The American Committee did famously and its card-catalogue of returned travellers, its relief committees for men and women, its lost-luggage chairman, its transportation committee and its Boy Scouts have done a herculean piece of work. Only those whose feet ached to go to the Continent in search of lost friends know what the best work of these splendid American volunteers was. In the strain of that awful week, when parents were separated from children and friends from friends, the American Committee and the American Express Company were the beacon-lights that guided us safely through storm and stress. No praise of their labors is adequate, but they served their fellow-men in a way that most of us will never forget.

(To be continued.)